



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans
1st Quarter Meeting
Minutes
September 23, 2016
Evelyn K Davis Center for Working Families
801 University Avenue, Room 127
Des Moines, Iowa 50314

Call to order:

1:15 pm by Chair Rudison

Welcome introductions:

Present: Clair Rudison, Rita Davenport, Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Miranda Mathis, Kenneth Morris, Lynn Sutton (via telephone conference)

Absent: Michael Hulme

Staff:

Monica Stone, Kim Cheeks

Approve minutes June 10, 2016:

Baba noted correction to the June 10, 2016 meeting minutes that he is the Iowa Nebraska NAACP chair Criminal Justice committee. A motion was made by Davenport to approve the minutes of June 10, 2016 with the correction made by Baba, second by Morris, approved unanimously.

Financial report:

Stone referred to the handout in packet titled "Iowa Department of Human Rights/Community Advocacy and Services Division/FY17 Budget Breakdown" and explained the funding recommendation from the legislature is a little more than 1.2 million for department. The past year funding appropriation was 10% less, year before that was status quo. Each year budget has decreased. At the same time employee personnel costs go up for insurance, pay increases, etc. Last fiscal year increases totaled 30%. The budget sheet shows a breakdown of the division funding by office. The Status of African Americans, back to 2010 when reorganized, budget has stayed the same. She noted the Dep't. of Human Rights Board

meets soon, where the budget will be presented for the department, and it would be a good time for a conversation about the budget and the need for commissions to advocate for increased funding because it affects travel for meetings and advocacy. Where the budget stands now, there is no room for personnel costs, the next cut will be personnel.

Morris commented, – He has a full time job and the commission aligns with his core values, but he feels limited in what he can do, with no resources to do work. With all the issues going on in country, he is fearful when driving to Des Moines. His education and position don't make a difference, it's a time where we are beyond talk, we need to get serious about our work, need to move to action. He feels the commission continues to deliberate with no action.

Baba – stated he concurs with Morris, wants to move to action. There are rules and laws that need to change, and committee needs to have a voice. Concerned about law enforcement policy shoot to kill for African American people, not shoot to disarm.

Rudison – said he's been working with the Des Moines Human and Civil Rights Commission and wants to really know – "is Iowa serious about human rights"? There is no support. He wants the commission to set appointment to speak to governor about his support and commitment to human rights and then speak to the legislature.

Davenport – she agrees with Stone, that we can't get to other parts of state to hear concerns of those around state due to the budget. Feels we can't address concerns because we don't have the funds.

Stone – stated in the Iowa Code organizations in Human Rights have right to do legislative advocacy and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. Offices and Divisions can give all tools needed to make sure commissions can do it successfully. Time for crucial conversations that are affecting all populations, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Persons with Disabilities – staff is equipped to have those conversations.

Baba – recommended the commission meet and come up with a proposal, decide on an approach and determine the impact. Feels we can't wait anymore for them to address our concerns.

Woods – suggested, if you're going to lobby the legislature should work with other commissions.

Rudison - proposed set up a conference with other commissions, to develop a plan to meet with governor to voice the concerns of each office and the need for more funding due to the critical time we are in.

Public comment:

Inie Clements - Iowa Black Business Coalition, searching for access to resources, held a youth summer program encouraging entrepreneurship. The program received 6 business ideas from youth. They awarded \$500 to the winner with the most successful idea.

Arnold Woods – President, Des Moines Branch NAACP. NAACP attended the Public Safety Advisory Board (PSAB) meeting to garner support for the NAACP Racial Profiling bill submitted last legislative session. PSAB voted to submit a recommendation in their report to legislature to pass a bill in Iowa prohibiting racial profiling. NAACP is looking for a sponsor of the bill for the upcoming session. He stated it's a slow difficult process but they will keep working diligently to pass the bill. Rudison recommended the commission read book Born Suspect.

He also attended the Des Moines Public School Board meeting to hear the report on black male students. Report revealed once African American students get to 6th grade, their learning goes in reverse. Feels we need to look at what goes on at the high school level and why they aren't learning.

1:49 pm Sutton entered meeting via conference call-in line

Chair Rudison – proposed due to time and duplication, to omit; commission, director, and office reports, agenda items and in Old Business - Policy Agenda update. It was consensus of the board to update the date on the Policy Agenda to 2016-2017 since nothing has been added or changed.

Cheeks asked to highlight a couple of items in the office report; she noted recognition by the Iowa African American Museum's African American History Maker Award, and shared the initiative currently working on with other community partners to share news to the community via a community calendar on 98.3 Vibe radio station and emphasizing the need for support from the commission monetarily by underwriting a spot(s) on the radio.

Reports:

Director – omit

Division - omit

Office - omit

Commissioners:

Mathis – no report

Morris:

- Will travel back to Cedar Rapids to assist with sandbagging due to flooding in Cedar Rapids area that has galvanized community to work together.
- Participating in discussions and think tanks about gun violence in the city, deaths, where folks outside of African American community came in support to develop a plan. A committee developed from those conversations – school district, law enforcement.
- Attended the history makers gala, initiative held by CR Civil Rights Commission – series called “legacies” where prominent African American women in Cedar Rapids. He felt

encouraged to see African American women doing work in the community. Executive Director LaSheila Yates of CR Civil Rights Commission, also chief diversity officer, has project where they developed signs with messages centered around diversity, on buses.

Davenport:

- will defer to her last written report for June 10th meeting

Baba-Singhri:

- Will submit written report
- Area of focus on African community, their challenges, adapting to place and finding resources to develop potential, very diverse from different countries, different ethnic groups/tribes, getting them to come together, working on organizing/uniting as one entity, eg. United Nations.
- Met with Sudanese who have same issues, seven different tribes, getting them to unite as well, Africans and African Americans common theme, children going thru school system and being labeled, some with mental issues, in United States schools assign grade by age, and not advantageous for Africans. Have concerns finding who to meet with in school administration.
- Working with a community member seeking help with legal issues due to criminal justice.

Sutton:

- Dubuque free dental clinic this weekend, Working with housing department on health issues tied to mold in subsidized housing and the need exterminate bugs

Rudison:

- July – August participated in certification program building stronger African American families, seven certified at Evelyn K. Davis Center to be instructors – ages 10-14.
- Met with CAPS members, community ambassadors to police department, to bridge community and police
- On Sept. 2nd attended festival New Years for Ethiopians, and met with various African communities about a number of issues and events
- In March Evelyn K. Davis Center implemented a re-entry program
- Met with Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission presentation status of African Americans in Des Moines

Old business:

Department of Human Rights Board update:

- no report

Nomination and election of officers:

The following individuals were nominated to serve in the following positions:

- Chairperson

Davenport nominated Chair Rudison to continue serve in the position, 2nd by Morris. Rudison accepted, Baba motioned to close nominations, board voted, passed unanimously.

- Vice chairperson – Rita Davenport

Morris nominated Davenport to serve in position, baba motion to close nominations, 2nd by Morris, Davenport accepted, board voted, passed unanimously.

- Recorder – Kim Cheeks

The board elected Cheeks to serve as the recorder, Cheeks accepted, board voted, passed unanimously.

Review and update 2015 Policy Agenda:

- See previous notes

New business:

No new business

Next meeting date:

Tentative date - Friday, November 4th in Des Moines.

Motion to adjourn made by Baba-Singhri, second by Morris, approved unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Cheeks

